

Alert

INDIA

Cloudburst, flooding and landslides in Uttarakhand

Geneva, 5 July 2016

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

On Thursday, the 30th of June, several cloudbursts caused heavy rainfalls – recorded over 100mm within two hours – which subsequently lead to flooding and landslides in Uttarakhand which were responsible for killing at least 30 people in Pithoragarh and Chamoli districts. Several people are missing and feared to have been washed away in a crisis that brought back memories of the deadly floods in 2013 which claimed nearly 6,000 lives. According to officials from the District Disaster Mitigation and Management Center, in Pithoragarh, eight people were killed due to landslides while in Chamoli, there are five people have died. The incessant rains have halted movement on the Thal-Munsyari road and the Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway while in Chamoli, the Alaknanda river has surpassed its danger mark. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a yellow code warning for next few days, indicating an alert for the same. It has forecasted that heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely in isolated places. As per the Meteorological department's benchmarks, this means that there will be rainfall in the range of 60mm-120mm. The alert has been issued for the districts of Nainital, Udham Singh Nagar, Champawat, Almora, Dehraun, Uttarkashi, Pauri, Haridwar and Tehri for the next 72 hours. So far, 10 dead bodies have been recovered, while about 17 people are still buried under the debris. In four villages of Chamoli district, six people were killed, while three others are missing.

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

In flood-affected areas in Uttarakhand, people have lost their personal assets & belongings, livelihoods, and several houses are reported as completely destroyed; the inhabitants are thus in desperate need of relief assistance. The government has initiated the relief works but it seems to the quantities will be inadequate; thus, there is a need for ACT Alliance to respond. ACT Alliance members such as CASA have a presence in the affected areas and have initiated distribution of food items to the affected populations. However, the crisis may persists as the weather forecast indicates prolonged heavy rains thus amplifying the needs.

3. National and international response

District authorities along with the National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force are still engaged in recovering those trapped in their homes. The Army, para-military and police personnel actively continue their search and rescue operations in

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the affected areas. Furthermore, the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand also announced a compensation of Rs 200,000 (approx. USD 3,000) each to families of victims.

4. ACT Alliance response

ACT Alliance India Forum member, CASA, has started immediate relief effort in providing cooked food to 250 affected families for 6 days using the Round Table mechanism. The other members of the ACT India Forum, LWSIT and UELCI, are closely monitoring the flood situation and keeping themselves updated. If the intensity of rainfall increases and is constant over several days, LWSIT will likely respond with an emergency response program.

5. Planned activities

As of now, the ACT Alliance Forum Member, CASA, has released some funds towards distribution of food to the flood affected people in Chamoli district. The priority needs are the following: food, basic non-food items, temporary shelter materials, water for human consumption and hygiene kits.

6. Constraints

The flooding and the landslides have heavily impaired some of the major transportation roads throughout the affected districts, thus accessibility to the most remote areas may be challenging.

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